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May 28, 2001  
PMB 294  
223 N. Guadalupe St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

FAA-01-8690-24

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

01 JUN -5 PM 12:14

Director Anthony Fazio  
Office of Rulemaking, Docket Management System  
U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL401  
400 Seventh Street, SW.  
Washington, DC

Dear Director Fazio:

I am writing to you about docket number FAA-2001-8690, regarding the protection of natural quiet in our national parks. I believe that the sounds of nature, uninterrupted by man made sounds, are one of the most valuable resources that need to be protected. It was one of my main sources of enjoyment when I lived in crowded, noisy places like the San Francisco Bay area, Manhattan, and the Netherlands. I firmly believe that preserving natural quiet in national parks must be accomplished by managing, and eliminating, when necessary, commercial air tours over parks.

The mission of the national parks is to preserve and protect for the benefit of future generations. In line with the park service's mission, the FAA should defer to the National Park Service's authority to determine the impacts of noise on park visitors, resources, and values. The FAA should also acknowledge and call on the National Park Service's expertise on natural quiet issues in any Air Tour Management Planning process.

I have never taken an air tour over a national park, however I have certainly enjoyed beautiful photos taken from planes flying over many of our national parks. So I do see some value in allowing commercial air tours, but not to the detriment of the parks and visitors in the parks.

With this in mind, I would like to express my support for the following actions.

1. The FAA should begin immediate enforcement of the "no new entrants" clause of the Act to prevent new air tour operators from flying over parks before the air tour management planning process starts.
2. The FAA should block existing air tour operators from flying over parks if they ignored the FAA Advisory requesting air tour operators over national parks to notify the FAA of their over-park operations within 90 days of the passage of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act in April 2000.
3. The 5000' Above Ground Level altitude should be the triggering altitude for the air tour management planning process. The members of National Parks Overflight Working Group, with nearly unanimous consent, recommended this level. The working group has already put considerable effort into this process and their recommendation should be adopted.
4. In fairness to all parties, the FAA should clearly define the process through which air tour management plans will be developed. This allows the public, commercial air tour operators, the national parks, the FAA, and all other interested parties to know the ground rules under which this process will occur and help to minimize misunderstandings and resulting conflicts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Donna Luehrmann